

Soviet Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles

We estimate the USSR will probably achieve a first operational capability with 10 prototype ICBMs some time during 1959 and could achieve a capability with 500 ICBMs in 1962. Although much is known about the Soviet ICBM test program, little is known about Soviet intentions with respect to the size of the production program, mode of deployment or role of the ICBM in any future war.

In the past Mr. Khrushchev has made provocative, spontaneous and sometimes contradictory statements about the ICBM to visitors. Mr. Nixon's visit provides an opportunity to provoke Khrushchev into giving some new information or clarifying earlier statements by saying that the US will soon have ICBMs at operational bases, that several recent Soviet ICBM tests have failed, or that the USSR is not ahead of the US in achieving an operational capability with ICBMs.

Khrushchev remarked to Governor Harriman that an expenditure of 30 billion rubles over a 5-6 year period would produce a guided missile force capable of destroying the industrial centers of the US and Western Europe. Such a sum would be sufficient to produce and deploy 500 to 600 ICBMs in hardened sites. Unfortunately, Governor Harriman did not follow up this remark with probing questions designed to determine whether Khrushchev was revealing the actual Soviet ICBM program for 1959-65.

Khrushchev's statement to Mr. MacMillan that the USSR would shortly be able to launch ICBMs from "mobile platforms" was not questioned. Another important statement by Khrushchev indicated the ICBMs went into serial production about the beginning of 1959; we think we know what was meant by "serial production," but clarification of the magnitude would be very useful.

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Priority Questions on Soviet ICBMs

1. Magnitude of the Program: Is the Soviet intention to obtain a retaliatory capability with a few hundred ICBMs or a capability to initiate war with a few thousand ICBMs? When will either of these capabilities be achieved?
2. Production: At how many facilities, where and at what rates are ICBMs being produced? (Intelligence indicates that Plant 8 in Sverdlovsk is producing ICBMs.)
3. Deployment: Are ICBMs now being deployed to operational launching facilities? At what rate? Are they at soft fixed sites, hard fixed sites, or with rail mobile units?
4. Future Developments: Are the Soviet leaders satisfied with their current liquid-fueled ICBMs? Is full production awaiting later generations of liquid-fueled or solid-fueled missiles?

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